



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

JUL 15 2022

From: Secretary of the Navy
To: VADM Richard Brown, USN (ret.)

Subj: SECRETARIAL LETTER OF CENSURE

Ref: (a) VADM Scott D. Conn, USN ltr 5830 of 5 Apr 21
(b) OPNAVINST 5400.45
(c) JAGMAN 0114a

1. Reference (a) is the investigation into the July 12, 2020 fire onboard USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6) (BHR) that resulted in the loss of the ship. On the day of the fire, you were Commander, Naval Surface Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CNSP).
2. At the time of the fire, reference (b) identified CNSP as BHR's immediate superior in command (ISIC). As the Type Commander (TYCOM) and Administrative Control (ADCON) ISIC for BONHOMME RICHARD, CNSP was responsible for various man, train, and equip functions which directly impacted BONHOMME RICHARD's material condition, the conduct of the maintenance availability, and the crew's readiness to combat a fire. In practice, Amphibious Squadron FIVE (CPR-5), also a direct report to CNSP, executed some limited oversight of BHR's maintenance but such oversight was not codified in instructions, missions, functions and tasks, or by CNSP. As CNSP, you failed to adequately codify the responsibilities you expected CPR-5 to execute on your behalf. CNSP failed to oversee ships' fire safety readiness in maintenance availabilities, where risk of fire is great. CNSP also failed to set a culture permitting Commanding Officers, faced with significant pressure to meet time and schedule milestones while in an availability, to raise concerns or properly weigh safety, including fire safety, against maintenance milestones.
3. Commanders are responsible for the proper execution of duties and performance of their subordinates. You failed to identify and mitigate against the lack of oversight that contributed to the loss of the ship. Accordingly, you are hereby censured for failing to effectively ensure appropriate levels of training and readiness in units under your command.
4. A copy of this letter will be placed in your official service record per reference (c). You may forward within 15 days of receipt of this letter a rebuttal consistent with reference (c), for inclusion in your official record, if you so desire.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carlos Del Toro".

Carlos Del Toro